

(9) 2113
A Funeral
S E R M O N
ON THE
Pre-mature D E A T H
O F

Mr. John Dudley,

Who Departed this Life.

At LEICESTER, Jan. 5th, 17¹⁵/₁₆.

By JOHN BILLINGSLEY.

The Memory of the Just is Blessed, Prov. x. 7.

L O N D O N :

Printed for Joseph Marshall, at the Bible
in Newgate-Street. 1716.

Where is Sold *Stringer's* Short-Hand, and all Sorts of Short-
Hand-Books, and Copy-Books, to learn by.

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A Funeral

SERMON

ON THE

Pre-mature DEATH



Mr. John Dabney,

Who Departed this Life

At Leicester, Jan. 25, 1782.

By JOHN BILLINGSLEY.

The Ministry of the Gospel is a Blessing to the World.

L O N D O N :

Printed for Joseph Mather, at the Bible
in Newgate-Street, 1786.

Wherein is contained a Short History and all Sorts of Short
and Book and Copy Books, to learn by.

eth) I have been with you, not without

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

my little Ambition would prefer even to

the greatest Professions: I seek not yours

but your's, O God, for

the Reason I have to hope that my

It is not unworthy of Remark, that God

has made no secret upon your Society till

the Spirit of God has been poured out

Dear YOUNG ONES!

I Am of the Going, You are of the

Coming Generation, Eccl. i. 4. One Ge-

neration passeth away, and another Genera-

tion cometh. God hath by Unworthy Me

been coming to You these Three Years,

seeking Fruit, and I hope it shall not be

added, (as in the Parable) and finding none,

Luke xiii. 6, 7.

It was at your Request that I undertook

my Catechetical Exercise among you: (with

how much Fear and Diffidence God know-

Epistle Dedicatory.

eth) I have been with you, not without Trembling and manifold Temptations; yet I have sought your Best Good, to the best of my Skill and Power. The Service of the rising Generation, is what my little Ambition would prefer even to the greatest Preferments: I seek not yours, but you, 2 Cor. xii. 14. I bless God, for the Reason I have to hope that my Labour has not been in vain in the Lord.

It is not unworthy of Remark, that God has spared me so long to you, and that he has made no Breach upon your Society till this late fore one.

The Awe which that Providence struck upon me, you, and the whole Assembly, made this plain Sermon heard with uncommon Attention and Affection; so that I could not resist the Importunities of you and others, for the Printing of it; being willing to do some little Good, though I be as Nothing.

(with my Cathedral Exercise among you: (with how much Fear and Diligence God know-

It

Epistle Dedicatory.

It had come sooner to your Hands, but that God was pleas'd to threaten to lay me in the silent Dust, before it could be Finished; and I was fain to use another Hand for the Transcribing of the greater Part of it. With all its Defects, therefore, to you it is offer'd. Others may treat it as they will, not look on it, or censure it at Pleasure, I am (as to that) indifferent.

I cannot part with you, without putting you in Mind how much it will be your Honour and Comfort, and the Credit of our Common Profession, that you tread in the Steps of that DearSoul whom God has taken to Heaven before you. Be Humble, Meek, Charitable, Love the Image of God where-ever you see it, seek for Knowledge as for Silver, dig for it as for hid Treasures, Prov. ii. 4. and let not real or supposed Knowledge puff you up, but in Conjunction with Charity be directed to promote Edification. Allow me to be Jealous over you; I hope it is with a godly and a kind Jealousy. Dread Back-sliding, Coldness, Formality;

Epistle Dedicatory.

lity ; be not over-hasty to think your selves
safe, lest that breed *Security*, which *alone*
will throw you into *Danger* : Value the
Means of Grace, Love one another with a
pure Heart, fervently ; Pity and Pray for
those who have more immediately suffer'd
by this great Breach God hath made up-
on us : And let me have a Share in your
Prayers (as you have and always shall have
in mine) till they become *Needless* and
Useless to me.

I cannot part with you without put-
ting you in Mind how much it will be your
Honour and Comfort and the Credit of our
Common Profession that you tread in the
Steps of that *Lord* and whom God has
taken to be His *Humble*,
most Affectionately,

Yours, J. B.

TO THE READER.

[REDACTED]

POSTSCRIPT.

READER,

HAD what follows come to my Hand sooner, you had had it inserted in its *proper Place*, (at least *the Substance* of it.) I can now only add it as *Corroborative* of the Character of one, *whose Memory will always be precious to me*. It comes from a *Worthy Minister* who attended him in his *last Sickness*: He writes to a Friend here in Town to this Effect.

His Distemper soon seiz'd his Head, but he had some *lucid Intervals*, in which many Things dropt from him, which could not but affect the *Serious* among his Relations and Acquaintance, and be a great *Refreshing* to them to reflect on, under this *Melancholy Providence*.

He seemed, almost, as soon as he came, (*viz.* to *Leicester*) to be apprehensive of his *approaching Change*: He told his Brother, (when he desired him to do something for him) that it would be *the last Office*: He also said to his Sister, that he was come *Eighty Miles to die with them*, and to lay his Bones with his Father's.

When he spake of Dying, it was not with any *Trouble* or *undue Concern* of Mind, but with *Chearfulness*

To the READER.

fulness and Pleasure. He did not, he said, at all fear to die, Death was not Terrible to him, its Sting being taken away; and he desir'd rather to leave this World, then to return back into it.

He thankfully acknowledged the Mercies of his Journey, and said, he had discover'd *more of God* in it, than ever before; and that Christ never appear'd *so glorious* to him *as then*, nor had he ever such a Sense of *his Love to his Soul*.

On *New-Year's Day* he rose pretty early, longed to go to the usual Place of Worship: *What*, said he, *shall I not Worship God on this Day, and begin the Year well?* Nor was he easily persuaded that he was *not fit to go out*; though at last he acquiesced. Even under his *Delirium*, his Talk was all of the *Love of God to his Soul*, and in a *Strain of Blessing and Praising God* for the *great Things* he had done for him, which might have become the *most Pious Person* in his *best Senses*.

Even then he was forming *Projects* for promoting the *Interest of Religion*, and the *Encrease of Christian Knowledge and Holiness*.

When *Death* still more nearly approach'd, and he was at the *Point of Expiring*, he continu'd still to *admire the Love of God in Christ*, *prayed very sweetly*, and would fain have *sang an Hymn*.

Mark the Perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37.

now under the Care and Pastoral Inspection of the Reverend Mr. Gwynne, of whom I shall not say any thing

[REDACTED]

without Offence, I esteem him to be (and conscientiously to say the Word) a truly Scriptural Minister of the Gospel.

J O B xxi. 23, 24, 25, 26.

One dieth in his full Strength, being wholly at Ease and Quiet.

His Breasts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moistened with Marrow.

And another dieth in the bitterness of his Soul, and never eateth with Pleasure.

They shall lie down alike in the Dust, and the Worms shall cover them.

IT is (my Brethren) a sudden and sore Stroke of Providence, which hath called my Thoughts to the Consideration of the Words which I have now read to you, viz. the Death of Mr. JOHN DUDLEY, who, going to see his aged Mother at Leicester, and other Relations in those Parts, at his Arrival there, was seized with a violent Fever, which in a few Days carried him from his native Country and earthly Inheritance, to a better Country and Inheritance, even an heavenly.

To those who knew him intimately, and observed his Conversation, there is no room to doubt of this.

They who lament his Death, (and who that knew him doth not?) know they have no reason to sorrow for him, as them that have no Hope. His Life was gracious, and his Death holy and happy.

He was a knowing and serviceable Member of an eminent Church in this City; that I mean, which is

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now under the Care and Pastoral Inspection of the Reverend Mr. Gravenor, of whom I shall not say my just Thoughts, lest I seem to give flattering Titles to the Living, and offend his Modesty; yet sure I may say without Offence, I esteem him to be (and conscientiously to perform the Work, and discharge the Office of) a truly Scriptural Bishop.

But though he was a particular Member of *that Church*, and under the Care of one who made Conscience of watching for his Soul, as one who must give an Account, yet he thought it an useful Help to his farther Improvement in Knowledge and Grace to attend and answer as a Catechumen here, and was most sedulous and constant therein; and living and dying, expressed his great Satisfaction in having done so.

He always carried it with great Respect to his Teachers, and with much Friendliness, Prudence, and Faithfulness to his Fellow-learners.

He was indeed (in all respects) publick-spirited, and gave great Expectations of eminent Serviceableness in and to his Generation; had God seen good to have lengthened out his most desirable Life.

He was descended of godly Parents, carefully educated (under the Government and Guidance of a worthy Minister, the Reverend Mr. Matthews of Mounsförrel not far from Leicester) in the Principles of Grammar-Learning, and Christian Knowledge.

When he had gone through the usual Course of Education there, he came to London; where serving his Time in a very religious Family, he daily grew in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and by his Diligence, Faithfulness, and good Temper, gained the Love of those that knew him: And was herein a bright Example, to all who conversed with him, of the faithful Discharge of the Duties of such a Station, which are so grievously neglected by many, I doubt by some professing Godliness. He knew and remember'd, what all in that Circumstance of Life should frequently and seriously reflect on, viz. that

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that the Apostle direct that Exhortation, Tit. ii. 10. peculiarly unto Servants, *that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* And though he continued several Years longer in the same Family, he did not (as in such Cases it too often happens) lose any thing of the large Share he had in their Esteem and Affection, but, on the contrary, grew daily more and more in Favour with God and Man.

I use his good Master's Words, "He was (said he) a Joseph; I could trust every Thing into his Hands, without fear of sustaining any Damage by his want either of Prudence, Diligence, or Faithfulness."

It is hard to find an Instance where Relations, Friends, and Members of Christian Societies, have so equally felt the Weight of such a providential Stroke, as scarce to be able to determine which of them hath sustained the greatest Loss.

I could easily have said much more, and that with the utmost Truth and Sincerity, by way of Character of this excellent Young Man: But my Business is not to give you a Panegyrick upon the Deceased, (though I think there are Cases in which it not only may, but ought to be done,) but to instruct the Living. Since any of us may suddenly, and some of us must shortly, be free among the Dead, as he now is. And may every one of us so die in the Lord as he did; and then we shall rest from our Labours, and part nor mourn any more for ever.

Sudden and unexpected Deaths are awful Instances of the Divine Sovereignty, and loud Warnings to those who survive, to prepare for their own Turn.

Holy Job is here (as frequently in this Book) answering the censorious Objection of his mistaken Friends, against his Integrity, because of the uncommon Afflictions which beset him.

Here he (in a very affecting manner) representeth that great Truth, which the Wise Man teacheth us in fewer Words, Eccles. ix. 1, 2. No Man knoweth either

Love, or Hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked.

One (saith he, any one, good or bad, righteous or wicked) dieth in his full Strength.] i. e. When he is young, strong, lusty, and likely to live many Years, having no Symptoms of Decay or Disease upon him.

Being wholly at Ease and Quiet.] Not only healthful in Body, but prosperous in his Estate, having Riches, Friends, Honour, &c. Yea, and which is more, being easy and cheerful in his Mind, free from those Cares, Toils, and Sorrows, which weary, perplex, and grieve others.

His Breasts are full of Milk.] Or, as perhaps it might be better render'd, his Ribs, or Sides, or Bowels, (for the original Word occurring but *this once* in Scripture, maketh the determinate Sense of it much harder to fix with Certainty,) *are full of Fat;* (for the Word we render Milk, is of near Affinity with that which signifieth Fat, and the Hebrew Writers accordingly use them promiscuously,) *i. e.* he feedeth heartily, and his Meat nourisheth him; he liketh well, and (as we commonly express it) is in good Case.

His Bones are moistened with Marrow.] The Marrow is the Nourishment of the Bones, as the Blood is of the Flesh, and it is the great Source of the Animal Life: So that Health is often expressed by *Fulness of Marrow*, as Old Age and Sickness is by the Drying and Decay thereof. *Prov. iii. 8. It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones.*

And another dieth in the Bitterness of his Soul.] i. e. When he is in great Sorrow and Affliction, which is commonly expressed in Scripture by *Bitterness*, as in *Lam. iii. 15, 19, 20. Remembring mine Affliction and my Misery, the Wormwood and the Gall, &c.*

And never eateth with Pleasure.] Either through the Scarcity and Coarseness of his Food, or the Vitiateness of his Palate, and the sickly Disorder of his Stomach.

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We use to say, *A good Stomach is the best Sauce*; and the want of Health (as many, to their great Affliction, daily experience) will make the *richest* and most *delicious* Viands nauseous and insipid, as *tastless* to us as *the White of an Egg*.

In short, some die in the midst of the *Pleasures* of Life; others not till they are wearied, and quite tired out with the *Sorrows* of it; and these both good and bad.

It follows, *They shall lie down alike in the Dust*.] The one as well as the other must take their Lodging in the Grave. *Dust we are, and to dust we must return*, Gen. iii. 19.

And *the Worms shall cover them*.] This is a farther Description of the *solitary* and *loathsome* Mansions of the Dead. We must say to *Corruption* and *Rotteneſs*, *Thou art my Father*; and to the *Worm*, *Thou art my Mother*, and my *Sister*, Job. xvii. 14.

(In speaking to these Words, I shall first lay down, and a little open, sundry *Doctrinal Propositions* resulting from them, and then give you their *joint-Application*.)

Doct. I. *That Health, Strength, and Prosperity, are no Fence against the Stroke of Death.*

This is a common Observation, generally acknowledged, but too little considered and laid to Heart by most, especially of those who most need to take it into their frequent and serious Thoughts.

Both the *Heathen Moralists*, and the *Holy Writings*, are full of this Doctrine, and *daily Experience* confirms it; and yet who almost (especially of the young, healthy, and prosperous) liveth as if he thought there were any *Truth* or *Weight* in it, or troubleth himself about it?

Do we not see it, and behold it with our Eyes, that many *languish* out a dying Life through a *long Course* of Years; while, in the mean time, Death *snatcheth* the smiling

Smiling Infant out of his Mother's Arms, and striketh its *keen Dart* into the Liver of the most Strong, Lusty, Vigorous Young Man?

The sad Instance that hath occasion'd this Discourse, is a clear and full (tho' very grievous and afflicting) Proof of it. When Men *feel* themselves live, and that with more than common Strength and Vigour, they too seldom think *they shall die*, and are at least apt to promise themselves it will be *a great while* first.

This their Way is their Folly, yet *those who come after them*, too commonly approve their Sayings, and imitate their Doings.

Blessed be God, all do not so; some remember their *Frailty*, in the midst of their *Strength*, and in perfect *Health* prepare for Death, and that awful *Judgment* which is to follow it.

But whether Men will *regard* and *consider* it or not, it is certainly *true* in Fact, that the Young, and *Healthful*, and *Prosperous* (and I will add the truly *Pious*) are as liable to Die on a sudden, as the Old and *Crasie*. And sometimes *good Men* die in Youth, God seeing it best for *them*, whatever Import such a Dispensation may be of to those who survive them.

Let me briefly assign the Reasons both of the *Truth* of this Proposition, and of that *Method* of Providence which it asserteth and displayeth.

R. 1. The Principles of Mortality lurk in the most Vigorous, as well as look forth in the more *Crasie* Constitutions. The one is equally a Mortal as the other. What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death? Can he deliver his Life from the hand of the Grave? Psal. lxxxix. 48. And he who is always liable to Death, may soon be actually dead.

It is much more a Wonder that any one liveth so long as some do, than that so many die Young.

A little Acquaintance with the Texture of an Human Body, and what is necessary to its Support and Safety, would

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would make us reckon it a Wonder, next to *Miracles*, that any of us liveth a Day.

Internal Diseases and External Accidents threaten us every Hour of our Lives; and were it not for that gracious Providence (which we are so apt unthankfully to overlook) we could not continue in our present Life and Being another Hour, no, not another Moment.

2. God displayeth his Sovereignty no less in removing the Strong, than in supporting and continuing the Weak.

Hereby he sheweth that our Times are in his Hands, Psal. cxxi. 15. that he is Lord of Life and Time, and may do with his own what he will; that there is no prescribing to him, or setting Bounds to his Almighty Power and Pleasure. There is none that can stay his Hand, or that may say unto him, what doest thou? Dan. iv. 35. He giveth none account of his Matters, Job xxxiii. 13.

Some die in Infancy, others in their full Strength, and others in decrepit Old Age; and there is no Reason to be given of this, but the Sovereign Will and Pleasure of God; Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Luk. x. 21.

3. All have forfeited their Lives to Divine Justice by Sin, and God may sue his Bond, and distrain upon the Debtor whenever he pleaseth. There is not a Life or Soul of Man but what is forfeited, and God may take the Forfeiture at his own time.

He may either make a sudden Seizure, or forbear a long time, or wholly forgive the Forfeiture (as in the Case of Enoch and Elias, and of those who shall be found alive at Christ's Second Coming) as to himself seemeth best.

The Wages of Sin is Death, Rom. vi. 23. Death worketh in us, 1 Cor. iv. 12. By one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, Rom. v. 12. Now who can tell how soon these Wages may be paid, this Work finish'd, or the Death which hath thus unhappily

pity enter'd, may overtake and take off any of us, and carry us out of this World, and lodge us in an Everlasting State of Misery or Happiness?

4. *This State of the Case (and the Knowledge we have of it) tendeth greatly to awaken us out of our Security, and render us inexcusable, if notwithstanding we continue in it. Knowest thou not, O Man! that thou must Die, that thou must surely, shortly Die? And wilt thou still go on to dream away thy short, uncertain, precious Life? that Moment on which depends Eternity!*

Wilt thou not bethink thee what thou hast to do, what thou mayest be call'd to suffer, and what will become of thee when Death hath closed thine Eyes, when thou liest down in the Grave, and the Worms shall cover thee?

What Madness is in the Hearts of the Children of Men, that they will not in time seriously think of such things? Should we not every Day ask our selves such Questions as these? *Why was I made? What have I been and done? Whither am I going? How fatal, and almost incurable a Disease is the Stone in the Heart?*

We follow our Friends to their Long Home with sad Hearts, and weeping Eyes; and soon forget that we our selves are following them apace to the same State and Place of Silence and Darkness. Oh! what need hath every one of us to pray the Psalmist's Prayer, Ps. xc. 12. *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.*

Doct. II. *Mens different States and Conditions in this World, whether Prosperous or Adverse, Rich or Poor, Healthful or Sickly, are determin'd by the Divine Providence, and disposed according to the Counsel of his Holy Will and Pleasure.*

This we learn from the Connexion of the Text with the Words immediately foregoing, v. 22. *Shall any teach*

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teach God Knowledge, seeing he judgeth those that are high?

The Providence of God teacheth all things, The Rich and Poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all, Prov. xxii. 2. The Lot is cast into the Lap, and the whole Disposal thereof is of the Lord, Prov. xvi. 33. The Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, nor Bread to the Wise, nor Favour to Men of Skill, Eccles. ix. 11. God hath determin'd the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of Mens Habitations, Act. xvii. 26.

God hath appointed where and when we shall be born, where we shall dwell, what our Employments and Success shall be, and when we shall die.

Nothing of all this is a Chance happened unto us, nor is our Success in any of these Matters left Contingent, or so as to depend wholly or chiefly upon our own Skill or Industry; tho' the due Use of these is our indispensable Duty, and the Decrees and Providence of God are so far from rendering them useless or vain, that they establish the Necessity thereof, and are our highest Encouragement in every wise and just, good and holy Undertaking, for our selves or others.

It is not my Business now to speak of the Doctrine of Providence at large, or to confirm the Certainty of it. I shall only give you the Reasons of this Proposition briefly, and so pass on to another.

R. 1. God is our Creator, and we his Creatures. And will God make a Creature, and neglect the Care of him? We are his Off-spring, and will he desert his Children? Turn them into the wide World, and there leave them, to shift for themselves as well as they can? How unworthy are such Thoughts of the Father of our Spirits, and how contrary to all the Testimonies of Scripture and Experience? God careth for Sparrows, and Ravens, and Oxen; and will he overlook Mankind, who were made after his Image, and designed for Immortality?

mortality? Such Thoughts as these are as *absurd*, as they are *impious*.

God will *judge* us; and will he not *govern* us, and *care* for us, *protect* us, *supply* us?

He numbrellh our very *Hairs*; and will he have no *Regard* to our *Heads*, to our *Souls*, our *Lives*, our *Affairs*? How unaccountable were it for any of us to entertain such *gross* and *groundless* Conceits!

2. *The Wisdom, Power and Goodness of God, do strongly infer, as his general Providence, so his particular Care of Mankind.*

If God *do* not regard us, and take care of us, it is either because he *cannot*, or because he *will* not; either of which, it were *absurd* and *blasphemous*, to the highest degree, to assert or imagine.

To say he *cannot*, is to impeach his *Power* and *Wisdom*; to say he *will* not, is to put the highest *Affront* upon his *Goodness*.

He *seeth* all things at once, can do whatsoever he *pleaseth*, and he hath sufficiently declared his *Good-will* to *Mankind*; therefore we may be assur'd he doth not leave things to go at *randome*, to take what *Train* and *Course* they will, but ordereth and disposeth all things so as may contribute most to his *Glory*, and the *Good* of his *Creatures*, *Mankind* especially.

3. *The Law of God, with its Sanction, inferreth his Providence.* God's *Moral Government* supposeth his *Natural*, since it is founded upon it; so far are they out, who represent these as *thwarting* each other.

God frameth our *Natures*, giveth us our *Faculties*, and then giveth us *Laws* by which to manage our selves under his *Conduct*, and will take an *Account* of us how we *comport* with, or *transgress* them, and will at last *deal* with us accordingly. I might add,

4. *The Light of Nature and Scripture concur in teaching and inculcating this Truth.* The former I hinted under the foregoing Head, and I shall not now stand to quote particular Texts for the latter, because

I have

I have partly done it already, and room must be left for mentioning (tho' more briefly) what is to follow.

Doct. III. There is no peremptory or certain Conclusion to be made of any Man's present Spiritual, or future Eternal State, from the outward Circumstances either of his Life or Death.

All Judgments of this kind, that are made by the Sons of Men concerning one another, are *rash* and *foolish*, and (for the most part) *false* and *erroneous*.

This was the *wretched Error* of *Job's* Friends (tho' otherwise wise and good Men) they saw him oppress'd with *uncommon* Calamities, and thence they rashly judg'd and pronounced him an *Hypocrite*. They had nothing to charge him with in his *visible Behaviour*, his *Heart* they could make no Inspection into; yet when they saw him stripped of *all*, *Estate*, *Children*, and whatever else of this *Worlds Goods* he had lately been so amply possess'd of; when they saw him *sitting on a Dunghill*, *cover'd with Boils and Ulcers*, *scraping himself with a Potsheard*; and above all, when they heard him (tho' he was indeed the most patient Man upon the Face of the Earth) when they heard him, in the *Bitterness* and *Anguish* of his Soul, *curse his Day*, and as they might, and probably *did think*, *flying in the Face of his Maker* for giving him a Being, without which he could not have endured *all that Misery*: when, I say, they saw and heard *all this*, they too rashly and uncharitably concluded him an *Hypocrite*. But however, at last God vindicated his *Innocency*, rebuked their *Insolence*, and would not accept an *Offering for them*, unless it pass'd thro' *Job's Hands*. So little do *ensorious Persons* (tho' otherwise good People) know or consider what *Guilt they contract* by harsh and rash Judgments of their Brethren, or how much they may, one time or other, stand in need to be beholden to the *Prayers* of those very Persons whose Character

and State they now make so exceeding free with; and that perhaps chiefly, if not only, because whom they censure are in low and mean Circumstances in the World, while they themselves are at Ease, and wallow in Fullness and Plenty, are Rich and abound in Goods, and have need of nothing.

This is a sore (tho' a most common) Evil under the Sun; an Evil, a guilty Evil, which by how much the more Men are involved in the Guilt of, by so much the less they care, or indeed can endure to hear of it: But if when I knowingly cheat my Neighbour but of a trifle, I cannot be pardon'd, till, to the utmost of my Power, I make him Restitution, (which is the current Sentiment of Divines, grounded on Reason and Scripture, on that head) shall I rifle him of his good Name, which is better than great Riches, only to make Sport, or to raise my self by his Depression, and be guiltless?

But I wave farther proceeding on so ungrateful, however needful a Subject; and turn my self to give you very briefly the Reasons of the Proposition under Consideration.

R. 1. *Because these, outward Prosperity or Adversity, are not the proper, peculiar, full Rewards or Punishments of Sin and Duty, of Obedience or Disobedience.*

No doubt but outward Afflictions are often the proper Punishments of the Sin of those who undergo them, nay they are frequently the natural Effects of it. And it is no less certain that God doth often reward, even at present, the Vertue, Piety and Integrity of his faithful Servants, with many outward Blessings, and the long Continuance of them. But as it were well for the Wicked, if these were to be all their Punishment; so it would be sad for the Righteous, if they had no better Reward to look for. But there is a future State where the Wicked shall be fully, finally, eternally punished, and the Righteous shall be compleatly, and everlastingly rewarded, and if so, neither God nor Man is to be censured, if, at the present, it sometimes fare with the
Righteous

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Righteous as if he were Wicked, or with the Wicked as if he was Righteous, Eccles. viii. 14.

For a contrary Management, if it were constant and invariable, would not so much confirm Mens Faith of a Providence, as shake, if not extinguish, the Belief of a Future Judgment. Our wisest and safest way therefore will be, to judge nothing before the time, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

2. Because no Man does, or can, see through the whole Scene of Providence, with respect to any other particular Person. We see not the inward Favours God bestows, or the spiritual Judgments he inflicts on others.

We see what God doth with them in one part of their Lives; but we know not, perhaps, how God hath dispensed himself towards them heretofore, much less can we tell how he will do hereafter.

If Job's Friends could have foreseen his happy Restoration, they would have foreborn their rash, foolish, and uncharitable Censures.

3. Because what we construe a Judgment, may possibly be but a Discipline; and what we interpret a Punishment on one, may be properly designed as a Warning to others.

We may easily mistake God's Rod upon his Child, (especially when it smarts much) for the Blow of an Enemy, and the Stroke of a Cruel One.

If a Viper has fastned upon the Hand of a Paul, Acts xxviii. 3, 4. it is too natural to think him a Murderer; and if the Blood of Galileans be mixed with their Sacrifices, or a Tower of Siloam fall upon a Number of Men, we presently conclude them greater Sinners than the rest. Whereas we ought (by our Saviour's express Direction) to look upon their Sufferings as our Warnings, and God's Call to us to a sincere, speedy, and solemn Repentance, Luke xiii. the beginning of the Chapter.

4. Because the Final Judgment of Men's States is reserved as peculiar and proper unto God alone; and the

the Declaration of it, will be the especial Work of the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5.

We ought therefore not to precipitate the Sentence, not to usurp the Throne of God, not to judge against Evidence, no, nor without it, no, nor uncall'd, nor unqualified.

Commonly they are most forward to judge and censure others, who are least qualified so to do; who have no Right, no Call, or pretence of Right to it; yea, and oftentimes even they who are themselves most obnoxious and liable to just Censure.

But I see I must contract. There are two other Doctrines remaining, which I must but lightly touch, and conclude with a brief Application.

Doct. IV. Tho' Men go different Ways to their long Home, and some arrive at their Fournies end sooner than others, yet there All must meet at last.

The Wise and the Unwise, the Rich and the Poor, the Healthy and the Sickly, the Godly and the Ungodly, Psal. xlix. 10. *Wise Men die, likewise the Brutish and the Foolish perish.*

The Reasons of this are many and obvious. I shall mention but these four.

1. The Decree of God, Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed to all Men once to die.* This is the Statute Law of Heaven, and not to be reversed.

God has, from the Beginning, fore-appointed what he had designed to do with Mankind, and determined all Events of Things according to the Council of his own Will, Ephes. i. 11. *He foresaw our Fall; He was not disappointed in any of his Councils by that Event. He justly determined Death to be the Punishment of that Fault. He therefore did not retract his own Sentence, but mercifully mitigated it.*

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I shall not now enquire into the Dispute, whether Death was the *Natural Condition of our Being*, or the *Sentence of God upon our Transgression*: Tho' for my own part I am fully convinced of the latter. But it plainly appears, that *Natural Death*, if that were all, was the immediate Consequence of the Divine Sentence; but it will be farther enquired whether *Eternal Death* were so. And that, I think, unavoidably follows upon the former Supposition. For *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. vi. 23. By which I apprehend nothing less than *Eternal Death* can be understood. *Eternal Death* is not the *Extinction* of the Soul, but the *Misery* of it. A *Living Death*, and a *Dying Life*, to last for Ever.

If Men did *duly apprehend this*, they would be tempted to leave *all the Affairs of Life*, and not to think any thing *considerable*, where there was *so great a Stake* to gain or lose. But our Unhappiness is, that *we live*, either as if we were *always to live here*, or *never to live hereafter*.

2. *The Demerit of Sin*, Rom. vi. 23. Where *Sin* goes before, *Death* must needs follow after. It is as due to it as *Hire is to a Labourer*, or *Pay to a Soldier*, as the *Original Word* imports.

That *Sin deserves Death* (in the extent we have before explained) we cannot doubt, if (in any tolerable measure) we know either *God* or *our selves*. An Offence against an *Infinite Majesty*, cannot deserve less than an *Infinite Punishment*, if a *Creature* were *capable of it*. And therefore what cannot be done in *Weight*, must be done in *Extent*. *Eternal duration of Suffering* cannot be a *Satisfaction*, because on that Supposition it would *not be Eternal*, but it is *the most* that the Case will admit of.

And how amazing a Thought is it, that *Guilty Criminals* must suffer *for ever*, and yet can make *no Satisfaction* thereby! It is the *Wisdom and Goodness* of God, that we have such *awful Warnings*, to avoid a Destruction

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on no less than Eternal. It is *Mercy* to threaten where Punishment is *avoidable*. But when even *such a Threatning* is scarce sufficient, (as the Event declares) What would it be then if *any thing less* were threaten'd, or if that which is threaten'd, should not *most certainly* be accomplished? Which serves to Answer the Objections of those *over-good-natur'd Men*, who think it not consistent with the *Goodness of God* to inflict *Eternal Punishments*.

3. *The succession of Ages*. God will not have all his *Work on Earth* done by the *same Hands*: Some must *sow and plant*, others *water*, and others *reap and gather into Barns*, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

Every *Age* hath its *proper Business*; and particular *Persons* have their *allotted Time and Work* in each *Period*, Eccles. i. 4. *One Generation passeth away, and another Generation cometh*. And each *Generation*, and each *particular Person* in it, have their *peculiar set Duration and Employment*. This is the beautiful *Order of Providence*, not only to be *submitted to*, but even *magnified and adored* by us.

The *Apostles* laid the *Foundation of Christianity*, and did it with the utmost *Advantage of Extraordinary and Supernatural Gifts*, and the *Power of Miracles*. They committed the great *Affair* to their *Successors*, from whom those *Advantages* were gradually withdrawn. Yet *God*, in *every Age*, saw fit to raise up *Men* furnished and qualified to serve the *Purpose of spreading his Gospel* through the *Universe*. They met with many *Disadvantages*, run through vast *Difficulties*, had all the *Opposition of Learning and Force* to conflict with; and overcame all, by that *mighty Power* that assisted them, and was continued to them, and will be continued (though in different degrees) with all their *Faithful Followers*, to the *End of the World*.

We have seen the *Struggles and Conflicts* of the *Churches of the Redeemer*. Our *Neighbour-Nation* affords us an *Instance* we cannot think of without *Trembling*. And the

the Case had been *our own* before this, had not God so remarkably appeared on our behalf.

We that are *dying out of this World*, yet *live in the Faith* that a better State shall succeed: That God will *finish his Work*, and render it glorious in the Eyes of all Mankind. Can we chuse but hope, that what God has done of late for Great-Britain (notwithstanding our Failures and Forfeitures, and present Unhappy Temper) is a promising Presage of the approaching Commencement of the *Philadelphian State*, Rev. iii. I am Witness to a great part of the many Prayers and Tears, that were poured out to God many, many Years ago, for such a State of Things as (blessed be God) we now see. They are gone to Rest; we reap the Fruits of their Labours, Tears, and Sufferings. May we adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and carry our selves as becomes a Thankful People under so Unexpected, as Undeserved, Deliverances. May we at last come to that Temper that so many have so long promised. May the Name of *Jehovah* be One among us. May we know no Distinction but of Good and Bad, Wise and Unwise, Protestant and Papist. And it is yet to us a farther Token of Good (amidst our many Discouragements) that God has raised up, furnished, and qualified many Young Persons, of great Capacities and Improvements, for the Service of the Ministry; Who appear very likely Instruments of doing great Service to his Interest, and bringing great Glory to his Name. We have still much cause to hope, that the Work of Conversion among us will revive; that the God who hears Prayer, will not be deaf to the Solemn Cries that are sent up to Heaven from this great City from Day to Day. It is surely a Token to us for Good, that such an Exercise has been set up in such a Juncture, when it was most needed; and that God has actually answered our Requests, in so total and entire a Defeat of the late Horrible Rebellion.

4. *The Restraint of abounding Wickedness, and the Rewarding of the persevering Faith, Diligence, and Patience, of God's sincere Servants, requires it should be thus.*

Were not *Wicked Men* to die, or were they generally to live long, the Earth would not be able to bear them, they would be so *Hard-hearted*, so *Haughty*, so *Cruel*. It is bad enough as it is, but if it were not for the *Shortness of Life*, and the *Certainty of Death*, it would be much worse.

Nor must the *Righteous* always *Toil and Suffer*, and have no *Shadow* to retreat to, no *Rest* after their weary *Day's Work*. God loves his Children too well, to leave them always, or even very long, in such a World as this. *ὁ φιλεῖ ὁ θεὸς ἀποθνήσκει νέους*, could even an *Heathen* say: Such as God especially loves, do often die young. Of this, the Instance before us is a very pregnant one.

Doct. V. *The Grave is a silent, solitary, and loathsome Station. There we shall lie down in the Dust, and Worms shall cover us. It is good to look into it now and then, and remember the Days of Darkness, which will be many, Eccles. xi. 8.*

Let me now, very briefly, give you the Reasons of this, why God hath appointed such a Station for Fallen Sinners, without exempting his own Children from an Abode therein.

1. *To teach us the loathsomeness of Sin.*

Graves, Dust, Worms, and Rottenness, would have been unknown things, if Sin had not entred. *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely Die*, is God's just Sentence upon Adam's first Transgression, Gen. ii. 17.

Death is not (as Socinians teach) the Condition of our Nature, but the Effect of a Divine Righteous Sentence. If Adam had not Sinned, nor he, nor his, should have died. That they should none of them have Transgressed, but been secured

red from so doing, upon the Terms of the *First Covenant*, is what some have asserted, but I can as yet see no *satisfying Proof* of it, that had *Adam* persevered, his *Posterity* would not still have been in a *State of Probation*, does not appear from any *Scripture-Light* we have, nor are we concerned in the Point. We are now *Probationers* on the Foot of a *better Covenant* in the *Hand of a Mediator*, Heb. viii. 6. And if we faithfully acquit our selves, we have a *much greater Happiness* to hope for, than *Adam* and his *Posterity* could have looked to enjoy, on Supposition they had all persevered in *Innocency*, much greater in *Degree*, tho' (in the main) of the same Kind.

2. *To wean us from the Body, and make us less indulgent to it.* Maintain it we must in all honest Ways, but pamper it we may not.

Amazing it is to see how many who call themselves *Christians*, live as if they were only or chiefly *Body*. When an *Heathen* could say, *This Body is not I*. I remember an excellent *Divine* tells us, "That where-ever you see a pamper'd *Body*, you may conclude the *Inhabitant* is a starv'n *Soul*." And another says very emphatically, "That the *Scavenger's Employment* is more noble than his that lives only to make Work for him." Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die, 1 Cor. xv. 32. may well besit the Mouth of an *Epicure*, but not of a *Christian*. Our *Reason* distinguishes us from *Brutes*, as we are *Men*; and our *Faith* from *Atheists* and *Infidels*, as we are *Christians*. The great Lesson of *Philosophy* is, to keep the *Body* in Subjection to the *Soul*; the great Lesson of *Christianity* is, to mortify the Lusts of the *Body* by *Faith* in *Jesus Christ*. The *Ad* is the same in both Instances; but the *Principle* from which it proceeds, gives the distinguishing Character. It is one thing to mortify by *Reason*, another by *Faith*; though in the latter *Reason* concurs, for *Faith* is most highly reasonable.

3. To magnify the Riches of God's Mercy, and the Glory of his Power in redeeming us from this House of Bondage.

We shall not always lie mouldring in Dust, nor be a perpetual Prey to Worms and Rotteness. God will call, and we shall answer; he will set us a Time, he will have a Desire to the Work of his Hands, Job xiv. 13, 15.

The Resurrection of the Dead is the Scandal of Pagans, but the well-grounded Hope of Christians. They who deny the Resurrection, are as much Strangers to the Power of God, Matth. xxii. 29. as they are to the Truth of Scripture. We depend on the Truth and Faithfulness of God for the Resurrection of these Bodies. He has said it, and he can do it. Whatever Difficulties our deluded Reason starts, the Promise and Power of God is a sufficient Answer to them all. He who formed our Bodies at first out of Nothing, can with much more Ease (if one thing could be more easie to Omnipotence than another) raise them out of the Dust again. He can gather the scatter'd Dust, the wandring Particles, and reunite them, bring them to their proper Form, build the House anew, restore the beautiful Fabrick to a much greater Lustre than ever it before enjoyed. Can any thing be too hard for him? Gen. xviii. 14. A Word of his must always be effectual to perform whatever he wills. Let us therefore stedfastly believe that God will raise these Bodies of ours, and will make them like to Christ's glorious Body, according to that mighty Power, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself, Phil. iii. ult.

4. To make us wise, in improving the Advantages and Pleasures of the Light of our present Day.

Our Temporal Advantages are not to be despised, and our Spiritual ones are carefully to be improved. God does not grudge us whatever is useful and comfortable in our present State. We may eat, and drink, and converse with great Freedom, Cheerfulness and

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Thankfulness; but our *Danger* is, lest the *Charms* of *Sense* seduce us from our *God*, and make us forget greater and better Things. A *Soul* devoted to *God*, relishes the *Pleasures* of *Life* much better than the greatest *Sensualist*. What I receive from *God's Hand*, and improve to his *Glory*, cannot but do me good, must always have a *delicious Relish*. But when I set my self in the *Place* of *God*, sacrifice to my own *Net*, burn *Incense* to my own *Drag*, Hab. i. 16. when I make the *Creature* stand, instead of *God*, to me; how can I but feel its *Insufficiency*? My *Guilt* is my *Misery* and *Torment*. *Love* and *Faithfulness* to *God* sanctify and sweeten every *Enjoyment*; and not only every *Enjoyment*, but every *Affliction* too.

Let therefore the *Remembrance* of the *Days* of *Darkness*, and the silent *House* of the *Grave*, put us upon *speedy*, *diligent* *Preparation* for the awful *Hour* which must determine our *everlasting Abode*. Let it make us *thrifty* of *Time*, *diligent* in *Duties*, *careful* to improve all *Worshipping Opportunities* for the increase of *Knowledge*, *Holiness*, and *Comfort*. How pleasantly would *Life* run on, were the *Time* of it divided between the moderate *Enjoyment* of those outward *Refreshments* which *God* allows us, and can only bless to us, and the sincere *Worshipping* of him, and doing all the *Good* we can to our *Fellow-Mortals*?

Let us now apply what has been said, in the following practical *Inferences*.

1. Let not the strong *Man* glory in his *Strength*, nor the wise *Man* in his *Wisdom*, nor the rich *Man* in the multitude of his *Riches*, Jerem. ix 23.

As great as these things appear in our *Eyes*, they are mean *Matters* to boast of. We have received them, and that of *meer Gift*; we cannot hold them but at the *Pleasure* of the *Giver*; they cannot make us *Happy*, even for the present; they must soon cease, and we with them. How often do we see the strongest *Constitutions* moulder, and drop into the *Dust* on a sudden? How little dif-

difference is there between a *Wise Man* and a *Fool*, when we consider how quickly a *slight Disorder* of the Bodily Organs can make the *one* of the *other*. *Wisdom excelleth Folly*, as *Light excelleth Darknes*, Eccles. ii. 13. but we have no more Security of the continuance of Intellectual Light, than of Natural. We have seen an Eclipse turn the *Brilliant Light* of the *Sun*, on a sudden, into *Midnight Darknes*. So may it fare with the *Wiseest Man upon Earth*, if God see fit so to order and appoint. Why then should the *Wise Man* glory in his *Wisdom*, a *borrowed Light*, of the continuance of which he has not the least *Certainty*.

And what is there that Men are more apt to glory of and trust in than the *multitude of their Riches*, than which nothing is held by a more uncertain Tenure, and which so many hold, whilst they do so, to their *Hurt*, Eccles. v. 13.

I have often thought, that in a *just Comparison*, and duly weighing the several *Circumstances* of the Case, the *Rich* have more *Reason* (if any Reason could be given for Envy) to envy the *Poor*, than they them. I cannot be perswaded, but the *Poor* (at least if their Poverty be not extream) do commonly enjoy more of the *Comfort of this World*, than their *Rich Neighbours*, for the most part do. They eat their Bread with Relish; they sleep quietly, their *Passions* are *Calm*; when the *multitude of the Rich Man's Substance* will not suffer him to sleep, Eccles. v. 12. He is afraid of every *Shadow*: Every one that comes near him, he thinks comes on no other *Errand* than to steal away his *Idols*, to take his *Gods*; and what has he more?

Not but that a *Competency* of the good things of *this World* is a *desirable Blessing*, an *useful Advantage* for publick Service, if with it an *Heart* be given to apply it accordingly: But otherwise so little is sufficient to *Nature*, and so much less to *Grace*, that a Man has no reason to be *Uneasy*, if God see fit to trust him with *fewer Talents* of that kind than others, since his Ac-

count will certainly be so much the less, and his Anxious Self-condemning Thoughts the fewer.

2. In the midst of Prosperity let us prepare for Adversity, especially for Sickness and Death: For who knows what a Day may bring forth? Prov. xxviii. 1.

What is our Life? It is even a Vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away, James iv.

14. How suddenly can the Great God (and does he not often) change the Countenance of the most Healthful, and send them away? Job xiv. 20. It is downright Madness to live without thoughts of dying; to promise ourselves a Continuance in this World, where we see nothing abiding, but the Fashion of it continually passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 31.

Let us therefore make it our great Care to live as those who know they must die, and then we may hope to die as those that have a Comfortable Assurance that they shall live with God for ever.

3. When Young and Healthful ones are taken away, let us that continue among the Living (considering we must do so but a short while) lay it to our Hearts, Eccles. vii. 2.

I need not tell you how much it concerns you Young ones, to lay this late sore Stroke of Providence to Heart; One as likely to live, and as fit to live, as most of you, and who, we were ready to promise ourselves, should have lived long and usefully, by the Unsearchable Providence of God taken away from our Sight, when we least thought of it; never to be seen in this World by us any more. What Marble must that Heart be made of, that can let such a Providence pass with little Observation, or slight Reflexions. No doubt but God did best for him; but the Remembrance of it ought to be exceeding Awful (and may it be greatly Instructive) to every one of us. Hear this Rod, and who hath appointed it: For undoubtedly it has a Voice, and that a very Affecting and Instructive one.

4. *Adore the Divine Providence, and yield to all the Disposals of it with a profound Submission and Resignation.*

We are taught daily to say, *thy will be done*, Matt. vi. 10. Let us shew, upon all such Occasions, how well we have learn'd so Necessary, so Just a Lesson. *Wo be to him that striveth with his Maker*, Isa. xlv. 9. Let no hard Thoughts of God be suffered to rise in our Minds, at least let us endeavour to *extinguish* them as soon as they are darted in. God has made me, and made my Friend, my Relation; and shall he not *dispose* of both? Can there be a greater Propriety than Creation gives? Is not the least Reluctancy in a Creature against his Creator unnatural? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, *Why hast thou made me thus?* Isaiah xlv. 9. Why hast thou disposed of me, or of my Friend, after this manner? Is not God Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works? Psal. cxlv. 17. And ought not the whole Earth to be silent before him? Zech. ii. 13. Can we get any thing by striving with our Maker? Can we reverse his Wise Decrees, or alter the Scene of his Providence? Will our Reluctance call back the Comforts we are so uneasy at parting with? Is it not meet for us to lie down, and submit, and say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good?* 1 Sam. iii. 18.

5. *Let the Sin and Folly of rash Judgments awe and restrain us from contrailing so bairous a Guilt, Matt. vii. 1. Judge not, that you be not judged.*

There is scarce any Vice of Humane Nature, that prevails and obtains so generally, (even among those who call themselves Christians) as this of *Censoriousness*, and *Rash judging*. Where can one come, almost, but we must hear the Characters and States of Persons exposed at Random, by those who know little what they say, or whereof they affirm? 1 Tim. i. 7. And reflect still less on the Guilt they are contracting by such Managements? How few of those who make free with their Neighbours, would be content to be dealt with on the same foot them-

themselves; and yet *that* (we all know) is the *grand Rule* given us by our Saviour for our Conduct towards one another, *Whatsoever you would that Men should do unto you, do you even so to them.*

A *Licentious Tattling Humour* contributes not a little to the spreading this so *beinous Vice*. Men *talk* without *thinking*, and so *say they know not what*, and scarce ever reflect on what they have said; tho' at the same time there is a *Restitution* owing in this Case, which is perhaps the hardest to be made of any in the World. I have wronged my Neighbour's *Good Name*, I have done him a much greater Injury than if I had stol'n his *Money*; and yet, in the one Case, I beleive I cannot be forgiven without *Restitution*; in the other, I forget the whole Matter, and reckon I am safe enough. What sort of Consciences must such Men have? Either very *careless*, or very *fear'd* ones.

6. *Let us all seriously and practically remember the Days of Darknes, which shall be many, Eccles. xi. 8.*

How many they will be we cannot tell, *so many* they will certainly be as take up the Time between our Departure hence, and the *Resurrection* and *Final Judgment*. As we *know not the Day of our Death*, so neither can we foreknow the *Time of the Consummation of all Things*. To some of the Dead, to be sure, the *Days of Darknes* will not be many; but the Wise Man's Assertion holds as to the *Bulk of Mankind*. The *Days of Darknes* have already been *exceeding many* to the far greatest Part of the Multitude of our *Progenitors*; and how many they will be to *us*, or those who shall *survive us*, is (as was said) unknown to us. But we may, in the general, look upon them as likely to be to our selves *many*. And then it will be proper for us to reflect, by way of Comparison, on *these Days of Light*, and *those Days of Darknes*.

This Consideration, indeed affects only, or chiefly, the meanest Part of us, our *Bodies*. The Saints, when they put off this *fleshy Garb*, enter in their *Spirits* into
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the World of Light ; but as to their *Bodies*, and whatsoever Advantages are conveyed to the Soul by the Instrumentality of the Body, those will be *Days of Darkness*. We shall no more behold the *pleasant Light of the Sun* ; we shall hear no more the *sweet* (and to many so charming) *Voice of Musick* ; we shall *converse* no more (as now we do) *pleasurably* (and would it were more *profitably*) with one another ; the *Delights of Friendship* (some of the greatest Mankind in its present State knows) as to our *entire Persons*, shall last no longer.

This should be seriously reflected on by us, that we may not too *freely* and *unguardedly* let forth our selves unto the *Enjoyment* of 'em, nor place *too much of our Happiness* in 'em ; tho' we may and ought, with *cheerful Freedom* and *Thankfulness*, to make use of 'em, especially in *subserviency to our main End*.

7. Let the *Prosperous* learn hence a *Lesson of Thankfulness and Watchfulness* ; and the *Afflicted*, of *Humility and Patience*. In the *Day of Prosperity* rejoice, and in the *Day of Adversity* consider, Eccles. vii. 14.

Much of what might have been said under this Head, has been hinted under foregoing ones : I shall therefore dismiss it with only this Hint ; if the *Prosperous* could be more *Thoughtful*, and the *Afflicted* more *Thankful*, they would each of them find their *Account* in such a *Temper and Frame of Soul*.

8. Let me hence call upon all, *Young Persons* especially, to flee *Youthful Lusts*, 2 Tim. ii. 22.

It is sad to see *Youthful Lusts* revive and flourish in *Old Age*. A *sensual Old Man* is a *miserable Spectacle* : But these are too usual in *Younger Age*, and not to be prevented or overcome, without a *special Care and Watchfulness* on our Part, and an *extraordinary Grace* on God's.

Youth is the *Seed Time* of Life, and usually as *that is*, the *Remainder* of our Life proves *Useful and Happy*, or *Hurtful and Miserable*. Thanks be to God, it is not
always

always so; but sad Experience testifies that *ordinarily*, and for the *most part*, it is.

Let me therefore *beseech* Young ones *in the Bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that they watch and pray, lest they enter into Temptation, *Matth. xxvi. 41.* and be overcome by it. How many bitter Sorrows might be prevented by a little *early Care*, the *Grace of God* co-operating, which shall not be wanting to us, if we *finerely seek it*.

If you say, What *Lusts* should Young Men more especially set themselves to *avoid*, or *subdue*? I will at present name but these Four.

1. *Pride*. This is almost as *Natural* to a Young Man, in our present fall'n degenerate State, as his very *Being*. We come into the World *dark Creatures*, and we no sooner get a little *Light*, but we think we *see all*. We can readily pronounce of *Persons* and *Things* that we know little of, and that with the greatest *Confidence*, *2 Cor. x. 12.* And so *comparing our selves with our selves*, in that *we are not wise*, even when we *think our selves most so*. And, if God give us his *Grace*, our *after Years*, and *sober Reflexions* upon them, correct our *Juvenile Folly*. And we look on our selves with more *Shame* and *Confusion* for nothing, than those *very Things* which made us *heretofore* think *so exceeding well* of our selves, and our own Judgment. Let Young Persons therefore mind the Apostle's Counsel, *be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, James i. 19.*

2. *Security*. Which lies in two Things chiefly, with respect to our present Purpose, a *Confidence in our selves*, that *we are able to grapple with Temptation*, and therefore may freely, as we please, *venture our selves upon it*, or *thrust our selves into it*: And next, in a *vain Presumption*, that *our healthful Vigour will last us long*, and that the Thread of our Life shall not *suddenly* be snapt. Nothing can be more *foolish*; and yet, alas! nothing is more *common*, than such *Confidence*.

Security is the usual Fore-runner of sudden and terrible Judgments. As therefore you would guard your Souls from *inexpressible Anguish, Distress, and Ruin*, be watchful, follow not the *blind Dictates of Fancy and Imagination*, but consult the *Word of God*; attend to his *Providence*; mind Matters of *Experience*; and beg of those that are *more Aged*, and have seen more of the World than you have done, to watch over you, and admonish you with *Freedom and Faithfulness*. And above all Things, take heed that you discourage not their faithful Advice and Reproofs, by *Negligence or Opposition*.

3. *Sensuality*. The Sins of this Sort are so contrary, even to Reason it self, as well as the Christian Institution, that one would be apt to think at first, that little or nothing need to be said to dissuade Young ones from them: But when one considers the *Tendencies of corrupt Nature*, and the *Course of the World*, we find it a very hard Task to secure even the *hopefullest Dispositions*, and those of the best Education, and most *towardly Inclinations*, at least wholly from them. The *Natural Appetites* have so much to plead for themselves, and the *common Practice* affords so much *Indulgence* to them, that it requires a great deal of *Wisdom and Fortitude* to keep our selves from being entangled by them. The *Boundaries between necessary just Delight, and sensual Transgression*, are so hard to fix to an individual Point, that many are *ensnared unawares*. And when repeated Acts have strengthen'd the Appetite, and brought an *Excess* into Habit, what Rending and Tearing does it require, to go back. Hence our Saviour himself likens it to the cutting off a Right Hand, or plucking out a Right Eye, *Matth. v. 30.*

How well were it therefore, if timely Care were taken to prevent a Difficulty which so few do ever overcome. I might instance in *Gluttony, Drunkenness, Uncleannefs*, a single Act of which leads to more. And therefore our truest Wisdom will be to resist the

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Beginnings; to get the Fountain of Corruption in our Hearts not only damm'd up, but cleansed by renewed and repeated Acts of Repentance, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Have ever in your Eye that noble Saying of the Lord Redeemer, *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God*, Matth. v. 8.

4. Unbelief, and Contemptuous Neglect of, or Unprofitableness under the Means of Grace.

Pride of supposed Knowledge, makes us often too soon wiser than our Teachers; and so we come first to despise, and then to neglect, or very coldly attend Divine Institutions. Besides too many attend Ordinances, without fixing any End for which they do so, or being able to give a good Answer to that Question which our Saviour asks John's Hearers, *What went you forth for to see?* If those who design no Spiritual Good to themselves, by attending Gospel Ordinances, reap any such Profit from them, it must be the Effect of an extraordinary Grace. But usually it is otherwise; and Men run round in a Course of External Worship without being the better for it, and they are even harden'd in Security and Presumption by it. Whereas experimental Savour and Relish will endear Ordinances to you, and make them the very Pleasure and Delight of your Souls, and your profiting under and by them will appear to all, 1 Tim. iv. 15. At least God will own it, and you will have the comfortable and abundant Satisfaction of it in your own Souls.

9. Harken to the Warnings of Providence.

Young, Strong, Healthful ones you see die; presume not therefore upon long Life. We know not who of us shall be next singled out, and summon'd to the Grave. To Day, while it lasts, is ours; but to Morrow is wholly in another Hand. Work therefore while it is Day, because the Night cometh wherein no Man can Work, John ix. 4.

10. Let

10. *Let us be thankful to God for our Deliverance from the Terror of Death, and the Loathsomeness of the Grave; and take heed to secure our Part in the unspeakable Privilege of a Better, a Blessed Resurrection.*

Read often, and meditate closely and affectionately on the 16th and 17th Psalm. 1 Cor. Chap. xv. and 1 Thes. Chap. iv. Possess your Minds with a firm Belief of the Resurrection. Consider our Lord's Resurrection as the certain Pledge of ours. Though you cannot properly long to be *unclothed*, yet earnestly long to be *cloathed upon with your House which is from Heaven*, 2 Cor. v. 2. whether that mean the Resurrection-Body, or the Beatifick State. Nothing tends more to wean the Mind from this World, Life and Body, than the Faith and Believing Contemplation of the Resurrection from the Dead, and the State which is immediately to succeed thereupon. If the Faith of this drop, or be feeble in us, all the Springs of vital Religion are broke and lost. Make it therefore much of your Study to secure and strengthen the Faith of this great Point. For if in this Life only we have hope, we are of all Men (unavoidably) Miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. (however we may think otherwise) for this, as well as for another Life and State.

Lastly, Let Godly Relations and Friends, from whom God has taken away Pious Kindred, Dear Associates and Acquaintance, in the Flower of their Youth, and in the most promising Circumstances of great Usefulness, and long Serviceableness, comfort themselves in this, that such are gone to Heaven. And if we are like them, we shall not be long behind them. We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us, 2 Sam. xiii. 23.

This Consideration is enough (by the Blessing of God) to comfort even an Aged Mother, on the Removal of a dear and useful Child, tho' by the most sudden and unexpected Stroke. This may and should quiet the
Hearts

Hearts of other Aged or Younger concerned Relatives. The Wound is smarting, the Stroke is heavy, but it is inflicted by a Father's Hand, for the wisest and best Purposes; undoubtedly kind ones to him that is gone, and not unkind to us that remain, if by the Grace of God we bear up becomingly under the Blow of his Hand, and make the right Use and Improvement of it. Such should think they hear God laying to them, in the Words of our Saviour to his Apostle, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know* (to my Glory and thine own Comfort) hereafter, John xiii. 7.

Exercise Patience, rejoyce in Hope, (Rom. xii. 12.) the Hope that we and they shall be together, and that for ever, with the Lord, (1 Thes. iv. ult.) their Lord and ours, in whose Presence is fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. ult.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be Glory, Praise, Thanksgiving and Adoration, now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.



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